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## *Senate*

### **IN CELEBRATION OF MRS. LOLA V. GIBBS' 100TH BIRTHDAY**

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I would like to set aside a moment to reflect on the life of Mrs. Lola V. Gibbs, a longtime educator, community and civic leader. She has made a lasting impact on the generations of people and the communities she has touched. Today, I rise to celebrate her 100 years of life.

Born the only daughter of Tabitha and George Gibbs on Easter Sunday, 1902, Lola enjoyed a childhood home filled with the laughter of foster children. Her family owned a farm, and together Lola and her father planted vegetables and tended to crops. At the age of seven, Lola began her education in a one-room schoolhouse. She attended high school at State College, graduating in a class of four. It was the degree she earned from the larger West Chester Normal College, in the company of other African Americans, which shaped the woman she would become.

Lola was assigned to Reeves Crossing School, teaching students in her hometown school in Woodside. Inspired by the excitement of her pupils, she became interested in 4-H. Before long, she organized the Woodside Silver Leaf 4 H Club, which was quickly recognized throughout the state for excellence. She would be a 4-H leader for 55 years.

Lola married Edward, whom she met at West Chester Normal, in the spring of 1931. They wed in her rose garden and honeymooned in Washington, DC. In

September 1936, Lola and Edward were blessed with their son Edward B. Gibbs, Jr.

Never complacent, Lola Gibbs went back to college. With her son just a year old, she enrolled in classes and earned a second degree before returning to Woodside to run her own classroom again. Lola's students spanned four grades. When attendance dropped, she moved to a two-room schoolhouse in nearby Viola, instructing children, many of whom she had taught before— in grades four, five and six. She organized another 4-H club, called the Viola Jolly 26. The club quickly became the largest in Delaware.

Upon her retirement, Lola V. Gibbs was appointed president of the Kent County Teachers Association. In the years that followed, she became active in the Eastern Star, AARP and the Women's Auxiliary of the Smyrna Home for the Critically Ill.

A life member of Star Hill AME Church, Lola focuses much of her energy on the success of the congregation's Historical Society. Both her church and her community were stops on the Underground Railroad. Both benefit from her pride in her heritage.

Lola V. Gibbs is an active, independent woman of many talents and gifts. She has four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. In 2000, Mrs. Gibbs renewed her driver's license, driving her Ford station wagon throughout Kent County, DE. Until just a few years ago, she continued to play the organ for her church.

Today, I rise both to celebrate Lola's one hundred years and the life she breathes into her community. To her grandchildren and great-grandchildren she will leave a legacy of determination, tenacity, and kindness. With pride in her students, her family, her heritage and her community, she is living proof that a life filled with good works is a good life indeed.